



J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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February 11, 2005

TO:

Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM:

J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "J. Tyler McCauley", is written over the printed name and title.

**SUBJECT: MCKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of McKinley Children's Center Foster Family Agency (McKinley), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted as part of the Auditor-Controller's Centralized Contract Monitoring Pilot Project.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with McKinley, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once McKinley places a child, the agency is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

McKinley is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. McKinley's headquarters is located in San Dimas in the Fifth District. During our review, McKinley had a total of 25 foster homes in which 41 DCFS children were placed.

DCFS pays McKinley a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, McKinley receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these amounts, McKinley pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2003-04, DCFS paid McKinley approximately \$775,000.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether McKinley was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated McKinley's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether McKinley received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed McKinley's staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a sample of certified foster homes to perform home inspections.

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from McKinley met their expectations. We also noted that McKinley maintained the appropriate staffing levels and that caseloads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22. Additionally, McKinley paid the foster parents their monthly payments in a timely manner.

McKinley needs to immediately improve their oversight of the foster homes. Our current review disclosed deficiencies similar to those noted by McKinley's prior assessments of each foster home. For example, in November 2002, McKinley's social worker noted that a foster home was poorly maintained and that the foster parent did not provide opportunities for the children to participate in organized activities. During our current review, we noted that similar conditions continued to exist in the home. During their bi-weekly visits to the foster homes, McKinley staff do not ensure that the foster homes are complying with all the provisions of the County contract. As a result, areas of non-compliance go undetected until McKinley conducts their annual assessment of the foster home. McKinley also does not ensure that the foster parents correct the areas of non-compliance or pursue further action against foster parents who do not implement the Agency's corrective action plan. In addition, McKinley does not always conduct the required number of visits to the foster homes or the required monthly contacts with the children's DCFS social workers.

We recommend that McKinley ensure that the foster homes comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 Regulations and pursue further action when foster homes do not correct the areas of non-compliance. We also recommend that McKinley conduct the required number of foster home visits and contacts with the children's DCFS social workers.

The details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

In October 2004, we discussed our report with McKinley's management who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, McKinley's management indicates that the home where most of the non-compliance conditions were noted has been decertified and the remaining two homes have corrected the problems. In addition, the response indicates that they hired a new administrator, a new In-take worker and new support staff to ensure compliance with all regulations and guidelines. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank McKinley for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Department of Children and Family Services
Dr. David Sanders, Director
Angela Carter, Deputy Director
Paul Freedlund, Deputy Director
Ed Sosa, Division Chief Quality Assurance
Pamela Jordon, Chief Operations Officer, McKinley Foster Family Agency
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**CENTRALIZED CONTRACT MONITORING PILOT PROJECT
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2003-2004
MCKINLEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

To determine whether McKinley provided program services in accordance with their contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations. The services include training and certifying the foster parents, conducting bi-weekly visits to the foster homes to ensure the children's needs are met and that the homes are properly maintained and providing quarterly progress reports on placements to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) social workers.

Verification

We visited four of the 25 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that McKinley billed DCFS for in November and December 2003 and interviewed and reviewed the case files for the seven foster parents. In addition, we interviewed and reviewed the case files for the eight children placed in the four homes.

Results

Annually, McKinley conducts a detailed assessment of each foster home to ensure all provisions of the County contract are followed. In addition, each month McKinley reviews each child's medication and medical appointment logs completed by the foster parents to ensure that the medical and dental services provided to each child complies with the County contract requirements.

However, during their bi-weekly visits to the foster homes, McKinley staff do not adequately monitor the foster homes to ensure the foster homes comply with all the provisions of the County contract. As a result, areas of non-compliance can go undetected until McKinley conducts their annual assessment of the foster home. McKinley also does not ensure that the foster parents correct the areas of non-compliance or pursue further action against foster parents who do not implement the Agency's corrective action plan. In addition, McKinley does not always conduct the required number of visits to the foster homes or the required monthly contacts with the children's DCFS social workers. Specifically, we noted the following:

Foster Home Visitations

We conducted site visits of four foster homes and found the following:

- For one foster home, McKinley noted in November 2002, that the home's carpets, walls, and doors were dirty and that piles of clothes were in every room. McKinley also noted that the bedsheets were dirty and torn and that a musty smell was detected in all the bedrooms. The foster parent also did not maintain a sufficient amount of food in the home or provide the children the opportunity to engage in group activities, such as sports or exercise. McKinley developed a corrective action plan which required the foster parent to correct the noted conditions within 10 days.

During our visit we noted similar conditions continued to exist. The common rooms were not clean, the bedrooms had piles of clothes lying on the floors and the beds were unmade. Additionally, one bedroom door was damaged and the carpet just outside the threshold of the bedroom door was torn making it a safety hazard. The bedroom windows did not have shades or drapes and each child did not have their own toothbrush. Also, the foster parent did not maintain a sufficient amount of food in the home and some of the existing food was moldy. In addition, the foster parent did not provide opportunities for the children to participate in group activities.

For a second home, two bedrooms had broken dresser drawers and a third bedroom had inadequate lighting. The children stated that the dresser drawer had been broken for a long time. Additionally, an infant was placed in this home and safety gates were not installed on the second story stairway, as required by the County contract. The McKinley social worker did not detect this condition during their bi-weekly visits to the foster home.

- For one (25%) foster home, the foster parent stored prescription medication in an unlocked kitchen cabinet. The foster parent stated that she was not aware that the medicine needs to be stored in a locked cabinet. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require that McKinley ensure that medication be kept in a safe and locked place that is not accessible to the children. The McKinley social worker did not detect this condition during their bi-weekly visits to the foster home.
- One (25%) foster home allowed a 16 year old child to smoke cigarettes. Both the child and the foster parent acknowledged that the child is allowed to smoke. The County contract requires that McKinley monitor for compliance that placed children under 18 years of age are not permitted to use any tobacco products under any circumstances. The McKinley social worker did not detect this condition during their bi-weekly visits to the foster home.

Frequency of Visitations and Contacts

- For three (37%) children, McKinley's social workers did not conduct the required number of visits with the children. The County contract requires McKinley social workers to conduct weekly visits with children during the children's first three

months of a new placement. After three months, the contract requires McKinley social workers to conduct bi-weekly visits with the children. The social worker for two of the children did not conduct bi-weekly visits to the foster home in October and November 2003, as required by the County contract. The social worker for the third child did not consistently visit the foster home each week during the child's first three months of placement during October 2003.

Foster Parent Training and Certification

- For one (14%) of the seven foster parents, the certification file did not contain documentation that the foster parent completed the required 15 hours of annual training during their second certification year, as required by the County contract. The foster parent stated that they received some training from McKinley, but could not remember the number of hours the training lasted.
- For two (28%) of the seven foster parents, the certification file did not contain a completed Criminal Record Statement. A Criminal Record Statement, which the foster parents complete, allows the Agency to certify the foster parents prior to receiving a Department of Justice clearance. The two foster parents in question did subsequently receive criminal clearance from the Department of Justice.

Miscellaneous Services

- For one (12%) of the eight children, McKinley's social worker did not review the Agency's policy and procedures, including the Foster Youth Bill of Rights, house rules, discipline practices, complaint procedures, etc, with the child's DCFS social worker, as required by the County contract. Subsequent to our review, McKinley faxed a copy of the orientation packet to the DCFS social worker for signature.
- For one (25%) foster home, McKinley did not conduct bi-annual disaster drills, as required by the County contract. The two children, who have lived in the home for almost a year, stated they had never participated in a disaster drill.

McKinley needs to ensure that the foster homes comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 Regulations. McKinley also needs to ensure that areas of non-compliance noted during its monitoring of foster homes are corrected in a timely manner and pursue further action against foster homes that do not correct areas of non-compliance. In addition, McKinley should conduct the required number of visits to the foster homes and contacts with the children's DCFS social workers and maintain documentation to support the services to children and foster parents as required by the County contract.

Recommendations**McKinley management:**

1. Ensure that foster homes comply with the County contract requirements and Title 22 Regulations.
2. Ensure that foster homes correct areas of non-compliance in a timely manner and pursue further action against the foster homes that do not correct areas of non-compliance.
3. Ensure that staff conduct the required number of visits to the foster homes and contacts with the children's DCFS social workers.
4. Ensure that certified foster parents complete, and have documented in their certification file, the required amount of annual training hours.
5. Ensure that potential foster parents complete and sign a Criminal Background Statement prior to being certified.
6. Maintain documentation to support the services to children and foster parents as required by the County contract.

CLIENT VERIFICATION**Objective**

To determine whether the program participants actually received the services that McKinley billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed eight children placed in four certified foster homes to confirm the services McKinley billed to DCFS.

Results

We were able to interview all eight children who stated that the services they receive from McKinley meet their expectations and their currently assigned social worker visits them regularly.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Determine whether McKinley's social workers' case loads exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker supervises no more than six social workers, as prohibited by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed McKinley's Chief Operations Officer, Director, supervising social worker and two of three social workers and reviewed case load statistics and payroll records for October and November 2003.

Results

Each of McKinley's three social workers maintained an active caseload of approximately 14 children. Additionally, the supervising social workers supervised approximately three social workers.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether McKinley's staff meet the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether McKinley conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

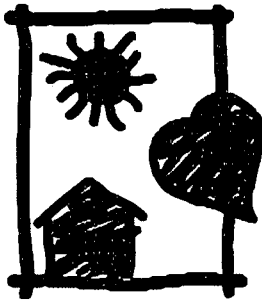
We interviewed McKinley's chief operations officer, director, supervising social worker and two of three social workers. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

McKinley's chief operations officer, director, supervising social worker and three social workers possess the required education (college degrees) and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, McKinley appropriately conducted hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section




**McKINLEY
CHILDREN'S
CENTER**

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Steven C. Young, Ed.D.

October 05, 2004

To: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

Brian Henricks

Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sandro Villa 
Administrator
McKinley Children's Center
Foster Family Agency

Subject: Corrective Action Plan

McKinley Children's Center has been providing services to children for over 105 years. The agency has always strived to provide quality services following all regulation, policies and guidelines from all regulatory and accrediting agencies.

McKinley FFA regrets that the Auditor Controller found some deficiencies in the recent audit conducted of the program. McKinley FFA has made all the appropriate changes and implemented new guidelines to address all the deficiencies found.

From the four homes visited, three had some deficiencies. One of the homes was decertified and the other two homes immediately complied with a corrective action plan that rectified the deficiencies found. It is important to note that almost all of the deficiencies were found in the home that was decertified following the auditor-controller's audit.

McKinley FFA hired a new Administrator, a new In-take worker and new support staff to ensure compliance with all regulations and guidelines. The new administrator is also responsible for taking steps to increase the oversight of the homes and management of the cases. New internal Quality Assurance procedures are being implemented to assure full

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adherence to all contract requirements, title 22 regulations and agency guidelines and procedures.

Foster homes that do not correct areas of non-compliance appropriately and in a timely manner will be placed on hold and face decertification. No placements will be made in a foster home with a pending corrective action plan.

Social workers document all services provided to children and foster parents. This information is also presented to CSWs as part of quarterly reports sent to them.

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER'S FINDINGS:

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

One of four foster homes inspected contained common rooms that were only marginally clean and neat. Additionally, some of the bedrooms were very messy. Beds were unmade; clothes were strewn on the floor. Also, in the same home the carpet just outside the threshold of the children's bedroom had a tear about 6 inches long. Additionally, the door to children's bedroom had an indentation approximately 5 inches in diameter.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

This particular foster home was decertified. It is the policy of McKinley FFA that social workers monitor the physical plant and safety of children on a weekly basis. All certified foster homes are to be well-maintained and appropriately furnished.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

In one of four foster homes inspected, it was noted that the food supply was modest and some oranges in a bowl were moldy.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

This particular home was decertified. It is the policy of McKinley FFA that each home should always have fresh perishable and nonperishable food in a quantity to meet the



needs of the next three meals and between meal snacks. This will be monitored by social workers and reported to supervisors on a weekly basis.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

In one foster home, the children did not have their own toothbrushes and toothpaste.

CAP:

This particular home was decertified. McKinley FFA foster parents will supply each placed child, initially and replace as needed, with new personal hygiene and personal care items. This will be monitored by social workers and reported to supervisor on a weekly basis.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

In one foster home, the children's bedroom windows did not have window treatments.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

This particular home was decertified. All of McKinley FFA foster homes will have appropriate window treatments. Social workers will monitor on a weekly basis that foster parents replace worn, torn or frayed window treatments.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

In one foster home, the children reported that the foster parent did not provide opportunities for the children to participate in group activities.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

This particular foster home was decertified. McKinley FFA foster parents will engage foster children in age and developmentally appropriate activities. These activities are cultural, educational and recreational. Social workers will



monitor for compliance. A written report will be presented and filed by social workers on a weekly basis.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

One of four foster homes inspected contained two children's bedroom dresser drawers that were broken. In addition, another children's room lighting was too dim to see adequately.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

Furniture and lighting is currently appropriate in all the homes certified by McKinley FFA. On a weekly basis social workers will monitor that all furniture is in good repair and that lighting is appropriate. In addition, a comprehensive home inspection will take place every six months. If deficiencies are found, foster parents will be required to correct them immediately.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

One of four foster homes inspected did not have a safety gate (two story home).

CAP:

All two story homes currently have safety gates. The use of safety gates will be monitored by social workers on a weekly basis.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

In one foster home the foster parent stored the prescribed medication in an unlocked kitchen cabinet.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

The deficiency in this home was corrected immediately. The foster parent was provided with special training and will be closely monitored. It is the policy of McKinley FFA that foster parents record the type, date, and time of all prescription and



non-prescription medication administered to the placed child. Social workers will monitor homes for compliance on a weekly basis.

Foster Home Visitations Finding:

In one of four foster homes inspected, one foster child was allowed to smoke outdoors.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

This particular foster home was decertified. It is the policy of McKinley FFA that foster children do not get exposed to second-hand smoke and that children under eighteen years of age are not permitted to use any tobacco products under any circumstances. McKinley's social workers will monitor for compliance on an on-going basis.

Frequency of Visitation and Contacts Finding:

Three of eight children's case files were missing documentation of required visits. Two children's missing visits were in the consecutive months of October and November, 2003. The other child's missing visits were in the first three months of his placement.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

All social workers will conduct weekly visits to all children. In specific situations, after three months of placement, and only after obtaining an approval from a supervisor, social workers may reduce the visit to bi-weekly. In the event a social worker misses a visit, he/she must submit a report to their supervisor detailing the reason why a visit was missed. At that time, if days before the end of the week are left, a supervisor will arrange for a visit to be conducted.

Frequency of Visitation and Contacts Finding:

Two out of eight children's Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not indicate that the FFA social worker regularly



contacted the children's DCFS CSW regarding the child's progress as required by the FFA agreement.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

McKinley FFA social workers will contact CSWs regularly regarding the progress of children in placement. At a minimum, the FFA social workers will communicate with CSWs on a monthly basis. McKinley FFA Administrative Assistant will conduct a monthly audit to make sure that regular contact with CSWs is documented.

Foster Parent Training and Certification Finding:

One of four certified foster parent's files did not contain documentation that the foster parent had completed the required 12 hours of annual training for the year 2003.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

All foster parents will complete all required on-going training prior to re-certification. The social worker conducting the recertification process must audit the file and make sure that documentation regarding on-going training exists in the file. This social worker must also secure the approval of a supervisor prior to re-certification. McKinley FFA has training available to foster parents on a weekly basis.

Foster Parent Training and Certification Finding:

One of four foster parents, certified for eight years, did not have a Criminal Record Statement on file. Additionally, one foster parent's file, contained a signed Criminal Statement, however, the foster parent failed to answer a question on the form, making the document incomplete.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

Currently, all Criminal Record Statement forms have been appropriately signed and dated. It is the policy of McKinley



FFA that all forms, including criminal statement forms must be appropriately filled out, signed and dated prior to certification. McKinley FFA supervisor must audit and approve each file prior to certification. No home should be certified unless all forms are signed and dated.

Miscellaneous Services Finding:

One of eight case files reviewed did not contained documentation that the DCFS CSW reviewed and signed McKinley's policy and procedures forms at the time of placement. The file in question was the file of a two-year old child. Therefore it needed to be signed by the child's authorized representative.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

McKinley FFA's Intake Worker will ensure that the DCFS CSW signs all policy and procedures forms at the time of placement. The Intake worker will secure an approval from the FFA supervisor or administrator at the time of placement. To obtain this approval, the Intake Worker must show that all policy and procedures forms have been signed by CSW.

Miscellaneous Services Finding:

In one of four foster homes inspected, two children placed on an average of 8.5 months indicated that they have never participated in a disaster drill.

CAP:

Implementation date: Currently implemented

This particular home was decertified. It is the policy of McKinley FFA that certified foster parents conduct and maintain documentation of disaster drills. The disaster drills are conducted every six months and every time a new minor is placed in the home. The drills will be conducted in the presence of the assigned social worker who will document that the drill occurred in the foster parent's case file.